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ABSTRACT

The total percentage of women employed in executive positions in television stations in the United States is substantially lower than previous studies indicate. Of the 1743 persons employed in those jobs in commercial and noncommercial stations in the top 50 markets, only 4.8 percent are women. This compares with 91.2 percent who are men (the sex of the remaining 4 percent could not be determined). Separating commercial stations from noncommercial it was found that only 3.2 percent of 1484 persons employed by commercial stations in these executive positions are women. For commercial stations, 92.6 percent are men and the sex of the remainder (4.2 percent) was indeterminable by name alone. Of the 259 executive positions in the 53 noncommercial stations, 13.9 percent are filled by women. The proportion of men was found to be 83.4 percent (2.7 percent were indeterminable by name). The small number of women employed in management level positions posed a problem for this study because percentages based on small numbers are misleading; therefore, the analysis is confined to gross categorical levels. (RB)

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WOMEN IN TELEVISION STATION MANAGEMENT: THE TOP FIFTY MARKETS

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According to recent data, women now comprise 51% of the total population and 40% of the total work force; however, the number of women in the work force compared to the number of women employed in upper-level positions indicates some inequities in hiring practices.¹ This situation is perhaps most distressing in segments of the society which are in constant communication with the public, most notably, the mass media.

The importance of television broadcasting, as well as other mass media, in the creation and dissemination of attitudes and images has been commented upon.² Television, some would argue, has created a negative, perhaps false, image of women in this society. Television has the power to change the image it has created, but not without the representation of women in the management and decision-making structure of the broadcast industry.

The FCC has endeavored to determine the employment status of women and minorities in broadcast stations by requiring each station to submit annual reports of employment (FCC Form 395). Form 395 contains nine job categories: officials and managers, professionals, technicians, sales workers, office and clerical, skilled craftsman, semi-skilled operatives, unskilled laborers, and service workers. The instructions for the completion of Form 395 contain definitions and broadcast station examples for these job categories. Two studies of women and minority employment in television stations have been conducted using the data from these Annual Employment Reports.

Jennings found that the current proportion of women employed on a full-time basis in commercial television is 23% of the total work force.³ This represents an increase of 1% since 1971, the first year in which stations were required to submit Form 395. In the four upper-level positions (officials and managers, professionals, technicians, and sales workers), Jennings found that women hold 9% of the full-time positions, an increase of 3% since 1971. Jennings determined that the non-commercial TV stations employed proportionately more women, 30% or an increase of 2% since 1971. The percentage of women holding positions in the three upper categories in non-commercial stations increased from 14% in 1971 to 15% in 1973. While many stations still do not employ women in upper-level positions, Jennings' findings indicate an increase in the hiring of women in these jobs.

The second study using Form 395 data, conducted by former FCC Commissioner Johnson,⁴ noted that only 6.4% of the individuals in the "high paying" positions were women.⁵ Both studies suggest that there is serious under-representation of women in the management, decision-making structure of television broadcasting. It is the persons who occupy these upper-level positions who are primarily responsible for serving the public interest, convenience and necessity. It is not assumed here that individual broadcasters cannot ascertain the needs of the public and serve them with appropriate programming; however, when broadcasters come from only those sectors which are not representative of all of the public then perspectives for the industry are formed which ultimately may be reflected in programming biases.

One of the problems associated with Form 395 is that it was not designed solely for use by broadcast stations. Form 395 must also be used by common carrier licensees (land mobile services, telephone, telegraph, etc.) and cable television operators. Consequently, data collected via Form 395 is open to criticism because the job categories do not relate to those job titles historically utilized in broadcasting.⁶ The purpose of the present study was to refine these categories, utilizing those more closely associated with the broadcast industry. In addition, by using a different source of information, we hoped to determine the veracity of the Form 395 data, and broadcasters' response to it, as documented by Jennings and Johnson. It was assumed

that by refining the categories and using a different data source, we could more precisely locate those jobs where women are employed and those from which they are excluded.

METHOD

The "Director of Television Stations in the United States" in the 1974 Broadcasting Yearbook was the source of the data used in this study. The information contained in this section of the Broadcasting Yearbook is compiled from questionnaires mailed to all stations requesting the names and titles of station executives. Eight positions are identified on the questionnaire: President, General Manager, Sales Manager, Program Director, Promotion Manager, News Director, Chief Engineer and Film Buyer. To some extent, these categories may influence stations to list individuals who are not, in fact, executives, but those who fit into the suggested categories. For example, a film buyer may or may not be an individual who is involved in upper-level decision making. The fact that the position is contained on the questionnaire may encourage stations to include this person with other executives; however, stations are asked to indicate instances in which different titles are used. With these precautions, it is assumed that the Broadcasting Yearbook listings are the best source of information about the most influential positions within the industry.

Obviously, there are variances in job titles and responsibilities across the many different stations and because of these differences it was necessary to expand the categories noted above. Sub-categories were added so that all of the job titles listed might be included in this study. The categories were expanded by coding two possible positions in Programming and News; three positions in General/Station Management and Sales Management; and four positions in Promotion. The Film Buyer category was extended to include Film Directors and a Director of Production category was added as it did not fit into any of the other categories. For non-commercial stations, it was necessary to add another category of Education/Instruction. Individual positions which were beyond the definitions of the categories were eliminated from the study. Titles which combined categories were coded only once, in the category denoting the most responsibility. For example, a Station Manager and Local Sales Director would be included in the Station Management category.

Determination of the employee's sex was made for each job title based on the employee's name for all stations, commercial and non-commercial, in the Top 50 markets. No attempt was made to presume sex where names were not clearly male or female; therefore, names such as Lee, Terry, Chris or initials were coded as "indeterminable." The relative infrequency of this situation (only 70 of 1,743 or 4.0%) would make it safe to assume that the sex distribution in the "indeterminable" category is not statistically different from the remainder of the data.

FINDINGS

The total percentage of women employed in executive positions in television stations in the United States is substantially lower than the Jennings and Johnson studies have indicated. Of the 1,743 persons employed in those jobs in commercial and non-commercial stations in the Top 50 markets, only 83, or 4.8% are women. This compares with 91.2% (1,590) who are men and the sex of the remainder, or 4.0% (70), could not be determined.

Separating commercial stations from non-commercial it was found that only 47 (3.2%) of 1,484 persons employed by commercial stations in these executive positions are women. For commercial stations, 92.6% (1,374) are men and the sex of the remainder (4.2% or 63) was indeterminable by name alone.

Of the 259 executive positions in the 53 non-commercial stations, 36 or 13.9% are filled with women. The proportion of men was found to be 83.4% (216) and 2.7% (7) were indeterminable by name.

The small number of women employed in management level positions posed a problem for this study because it precluded any sophisticated analysis of the data. In many cases, when constructing cross-tabulation tables of the data, only one or two women (in many instances, none) might be employed in a position. Percentages based on such small numbers would be misleading; therefore, our analysis tends to be confined to rather gross categorical levels.

Market Size. An analysis of the proportion of women employed in executive positions by commercial stations in the Top 10 and remaining 40 markets reveals no deviation from the overall percentage of 3.2%. In the Top 10 markets there are 14 (3.2%) women employed in these positions and for markets 11-50 there are 33 (3.2%) women employed. Some variations do occur, however, within some of the market categories. In the 11-20 market category there are 8 (2.5%) women employed in executive positions. For markets 21-30 there are 13 women employed or 4.8%. For markets 31-40 the totals are 7 or 2.9% and for markets 41-50, the figures are 5 or 2.3%.

An equitable distribution of this low percentage does not exist in all of the 50 markets. In 20 of the 50, no women could be ascertained to be employed in any of the executive level positions. The greatest number of markets employing women was found to be the 21-30 category; eight of these ten markets employed women in these positions. The 41-50 group ranked lowest in this respect with only four of the ten employing women in executive positions. These market groups had, respectively, the highest and lowest total percentages of women employed.

Job Categories. The representation of women in executive positions in television stations varies from job to job; however, by combining categories with multi-level positions, a hierarchy can be established which indicates the types of positions most frequently held by women.

For the commercial stations, the highest proportion of women relative to the total employees in the category, occurs in film and promotion job categories. It is difficult to speculate on the exact responsibilities of these jobs, but typically other executive positions carry with them more responsibility, higher status and pay, and, more importantly, more influence over a station's programming policies.

In non-commercial stations promotion is, as it is in the commercial stations, the executive position most frequently held by women. The high proportion of women in the Education/Instruction category might have been predicted since women have been least discriminated against in the field of education.

(INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE)

Affiliates, Independents and Non-Commercial. The total percentages of executive position women employed by network affiliates is slightly lower, 2.9% (33), than it is for all commercial stations (3.2%, 47). Of the three, CBS affiliates employ the highest percentage of women in these positions, 3.5% (13). ABC and NBC affiliates, in these job categories, employ 2.4% women (8 and 9, respectively). The independent stations employ a greater percentage of women than any of the individual groupings of network affiliates, 3.9% (14).

Not many differences of magnitude are revealed in a comparison of network affiliates; however, some differences should be noted. The only woman executive in Sales in the Top 50 markets is employed in an NBC affiliated station. CBS affiliates have three women employed in the General/Station Management category while ABC and NBC stations employ none. The only women News Directors, among the Top 50 market stations, are employed in independent stations. Although it would seem that women fare a little better in independent stations, it is difficult to make any conclusive statements about the stations because the total number of women is still very small, relative to the number of men employed. Again we note that promotion jobs tend to have more women employed in them than any of the other categories.

An analysis of the data was made for the network owned and operated stations. It revealed that 4.6% (6) of the executive positions were held by women, slightly higher than for other categories of affiliated and independent stations; however, these positions again were concentrated in the promotion category.

For the non-commercial stations, women in executive positions was cross-tabulated by four different types of license holders: a) institutions of higher education (7), b) community organizations (9), c) local public school systems (20), and d) state boards of education (17). The number in parentheses indicate the number of stations in each category. The results of this analysis were that for institutions of higher education 17.1% (6) of the total employees in executive positions were women. Stations licensed to community organizations employ 14.9% (7) women in these positions. For stations licensed to local public school systems and state boards of education the proportion of women executives is 12.4% (12) and 10.4% (8) respectively. The somewhat higher percentage of women in stations licensed to institutions of higher education may be due, in part, to the prevalence of well-educated, well-qualified women in communities where the institutions are located.

Region. The geographical differences in the proportion of women in non-commercial station management are somewhat more pronounced than for commercial stations. The highest proportion of women found in executive positions is in the South and Midwest, but for the commercial stations these geographic regions are lowest.

(INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE)

Date of Origination. It was thought that perhaps older stations would have substantially lower percentages because of the longevity and institutionalization of the male management personnel. The findings are not very revealing. Commercial stations which went on the air before 1950 employ 3.3% women (21 of 645); those on the air between January 1950 and December 1959 employ 2.7% (15 of 565) executive women; and those stations which went on the air in 1960 or later employ 4% (11 of 275) management level women.

For non-commercial stations two categories were identified: those stations which went on the air before January 1960 and those after that date. The percentages were

almost identical in terms of female management employment: 13.7% for stations that originated broadcasting before January 1960 and 12.6% for stations going on the air after that date.

DISCUSSION

Three observations about the results of this study seem obvious and our comments and discussion relate to two of these observations. The first is that women are grossly under-represented in the management level, decision-making positions of TV stations in these markets. This finding is unambiguous and requires little additional comment.

The second observation is that these results, when compared with Jennings' and Johnson's data, indicate fewer women in management positions. One could well ask why these differences exist.

The major difference in this study, when compared to the Jennings and Johnson studies, is the source of the data. Jennings and Johnson used Form 395 data while this study used data from the Broadcasting Yearbook. Obviously there are other differences in the studies, such as the time of the data collection and the fact that the Top 50 markets differ slightly from year to year. The important distinction, however, in the two data sources is the job categories. The upper-level positions of Form 395 are not very precise, but more importantly, they do not relate to those used by the broadcasting industry. The present study utilized those positions which the broadcasting industry has traditionally used and which have utilitarian purpose for the industry.

We would argue here that the differences in the studies result from a basic deficiency in Form 395 to accurately assess the employment situation in broadcast stations. For example, if we may assume that the most influential position, in terms of determining station policy, is the general or station manager, then our data reveals that almost no women are employed in that position (1.2%, 4) while Jennings reports, from Form 395 data, that 8% (407) of the category "Officials and Managers" are women in the Top 50 markets. It may be possible for a station to honestly report female "administrative assistants" as "Officials and Managers," even though they are, in practice, secretaries. Also, stations could report executives or majority stockholders of corporations who are women but do not have any daily involvement with the station's activities, indeed, may never be involved in any way in the determination of station policy. The point to be made here is that Form 395 is inadequate because it does not utilize those job categories typically and historically utilized in broadcasting.

The third observation is that, by utilizing the job category scheme most closely associated with the broadcasting industry, it has been revealed that most women who are employed in management level positions assume positions of presumably less pay, status, and prestige, but more importantly, positions which have potentially little impact on station policy. That is, women are most often found in promotion and film departments of stations rather than in station programming, news, or sales management. It is safe to assume that the promotion and film department employees have little impact on station or programming policies.

Finally, we recommend that Form 395 be revised. First, the job categories should be brought into line with those most often used in broadcasting, as noted above. Secondly, Form 395 should link the position occupied with the salary for that position. Although it may not be axiomatic that, within broadcasting stations, people are financially rewarded on the basis of responsibilities and their influence on policy, it is usually the case; therefore, we suggest that Form 395 be revised to incorporate salary. For example, stations could be requested to provide an index of salary, such as a ranking of salaries from high to low and an indication of how each person (or position) reported on Form 395 ranks.

FOOTNOTES

¹These data were obtained from "Twenty Facts of Women Workers," U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Washington, D.C. June, 1974.

²See, for example, Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960.

³Ralph M. Jennings and David A. Tillyer, Television Station Employment Practices: The Status of Minorities and Women, 1973. New York: Office of Communication, United Church of Christ, October, 1973.

⁴Nicholas Johnson, Broadcasting in America: The Performance of Network Affiliates in the Top Fifty Markets. Washington, D.C.: Federal Communications Commission Reports (42 FCC 2d), July, 1973.

⁵Johnson added "skilled craftsmen" to the upper four categories to arrive at his "high paying" definition.

⁶One such criticism of Form 395 is contained in "The Federal Civil Rights Enforcement Effort - 1974," Volume I of To Regulate in the Public Interest; A Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C., November, 1974.

TABLE I

Women Employment by Job Category

<u>Job Category</u>	<u>Commercial</u>				<u>Total Commercial (n)</u>		<u>Non-Commercial (n)</u>	
	<u>Network Affiliates (n)</u>	<u>Independents (n)</u>						
Film	16.7%	(3)	20.0%	(1)	17.4%	(4)	----	---
Promotion	13.2	(18)	19.0	(8)	14.6	(26)	52.0%	(13)
President	6.0	(6)	----	---	4.6	(6)	12.5	(3)
Programming	1.5	(2)	4.9	(2)	2.3	(4)	10.3	(4)
General/Station Management	1.2	(3)	1.1	(1)	1.2	(4)	13.6	(11)
News	----	---	6.3	(2)	1.2	(2)	----	---
Sales	.5	(1)	----	---	.4	(1)	----	---
Engineering	----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---
Production	----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---
Education/ Instruction	----	---	----	---	----	---	38.5	(5)

TABLE II
Women Employment by Geographic Region

<u>Region</u>	<u>Commercial</u>		<u>Non-Commercial</u>	
	<u>No. of Stations</u>	<u>Women (n)</u>	<u>No. of Stations</u>	<u>Women (n)</u>
Southwest	23	4.8% (7)	6	12.1% (4)
Pacific/Rocky Mountain	40	4.7 (13)	9	11.4 (5)
Northeast/East/D.C.	48	3.7 (13)	11	10.5 (6)
Midwest	53	2.4 (9)	12	14.8 (8)
South	53	2.3 (8)	13	17.1 (12)